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1865
BRIEF

ON

EMIGRATION & COLONIZATION

AND

REPORT

IN ANSWER TO

A RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE.

Mitchell, James

WASHINGTON:

POLKINHORN & SON, BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS.
1865.

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PROPOSITIONS.

1. "All men are created free and equal. But a separate and independent subsistence for the great families of men, is clearly marked out by the Divine Ruler."

2. "Society is an ordinance of Heaven, having for its object the happiness, prosperity and peace of its members."

3. "Governments are designed to guard the peace, prosperity and happiness of society, and to remove all political evils."

4. "A homogeneous population is necessary to the existance of a sound republic."

5. "Slaves and peasants, deprived of the right of citizenship, and suffering degradation, are incompatable with the genius of republicanism."

6. "The United States of North America should be a pure republic."

7. "There is no salvation for another race that comes in conflict with the Anglo-Saxon race, but in fusion with it. All others that conflict with it will be borne down by it."

8. "The colored population of this country cannot be other than a class of peasants, if excluded from white society."

9. "Where men are truly religious and moral, the white and black races of the United States do not mix—so the influence of religion will never effect fusion, or destroy the right of choice in the parties."

10. "No two races, kept distinct by the refusal of the stronger (or majority race) to fuse with the weaker (or minority race), can dwell together in the same country on terms of social equality."

11. "A heterogeneous population, that will not amalgamate (on righteous terms), sooner or later, becomes a turbulent, restless and revolutionary population."

12. "The separation of the races, and the erection of the colored race into an independent and separate commonwealth, are the true and only remedies for the disabilities of the colored race."

—*Report to the Indiana Legislature, 1852.*

13. Mixed races create the necessity for imperial forms of government, and will sooner or later superinduce a strong central form of rule, to settle conflicting interests.

LETTER ON COLONIZATION.

Honorable and Dear Sir:

Permit me to review the question of colonization, as a policy of the Government, from a political stand-point, as disclosed by the acts of the Government; I leave the merit of the policy for future discussion, and simply ask the question, "What is the policy of the Government thereon?"

In answer I will respectfully state, that the spirit and policy of colonization underlies the enactments of the 37th Congress on the negro question, culminating in the Proclamation of Emancipation of September 22d, 1862, which is a colonization document, both as to *words and intention*. This measure was asked of Mr. Lincoln and his party, as a condition on the part of the Western Democracy who supported him, and out of which they cannot now be defrauded without endangering the unity of the existing organization, as passing events clearly disclose.

The authority given President Lincoln on this subject is as follows, made and adopted to enable him to meet his obligations to his western supporters. The law for the measure is found in the 12th section of the Confiscation Act, and placed there to make that act a more palatable measure for the western men—approved July 17, 1862.

"And be it further enacted, That the President of the United States is hereby authorized to make provisions for the transportation, colonization, and settlement, in some tropical country beyond the limits of the United

States, of such persons of the African race, made free by the provisions of this act, as may be willing to emigrate—having first obtained the consent of the government of said country to their protection and settlement within the same, with all the rights and privileges of freemen.”

This is the standing authority and instruction given the President, on it he issued to the writer an amended commission, dated August 4th, 1862, which is not dependent on supply bills, but is effective until revoked by the President. The power of the President to make this appointment is not questioned by the Attorney General, his opinion is rendered on salary, made unfortunately on a partial statement of the facts as to funds in the Treasury, so much so as to justify its being set aside; for the books of the Treasury disclose the fact, that on the 31st of July, 1865, there was in the Treasury, subject to requisition for colonization purposes, \$205,980, collected under the tax law approved June 7th, 1862, (see the last paragraph of section 12.)

“And one-fourth shall also be paid over to said State, as a fund to aid in the colonization or emigration from said State of any free persons of African descent who may desire to remove therefrom to Hayti, Liberia, or any other tropical state or country.”

My commission comprehends the supervision of this fund, so far as the General Government has to do with it, as I was “appointed to aid in the execution of the several laws and parts of laws” which relate to colonization, and “under the direction of the President.”

The above enactment and settlement of colonization, as policy, was followed, in quick succession, by the Proclamation of Emancipation two months and five days later; and that of January 1st, 1863, dissolved the limitation as to time, and let the fundamental proclamation of September 22 take effect, which unquestionably is a colonization measure of *the most solemn and binding character*—an instrument “of Providence,” in all its words and terms, against which re-

sistance will prove madness and folly; the same mind that designed it to be an instrument of emancipation designed it to be equally an instrument of colonization—it *was intended to be so*. It proclaims to the world, “*That the efforts to colonize persons of African descent, with their own consent, upon the continent, or elsewhere, with the previously obtained consent of the government existing there, will be continued.*” This policy, bequeathed to this nation by President Lincoln, in the midst of so much blood, North and South, seals the case beyond the power of parties or men to re-open it.

Again—to add further weight to this policy, and to root it deeper in the national heart and national economy, it has been surrounded with the solemnities of our Holy Religion, and the sanction of the oath has forced it home on the conscience and the heart of the people of the South.

The success of our arms has enabled us to impose the above measure of emancipation on the people of the South, and enabled us to exact an oath binding it on them in all its provisions. Thus it has become a solemn compact and covenant between the two parties late at issue.

It is an obligation of our own making, both as to form and substance. Mr. Lincoln might have been silent on the point of colonization contained therein, but as a true statesman he did not choose to be so. When the gauge of battle decided against the South—as a generous people should do—they come forward, and, with proper unanimity, assume the obligations imposed, and swear to support the Proclamation of Emancipation, colonization included. Does that assumption impose no obligation, no duty on the maker, the framer of the instrument? is there no corresponding obligation fastened on the people of the North? Surely there is. As one sadly cognizant to the fearful judgment that has swept over the land, and for seventeen years has seen the gathering storm, and warned my people of its approach, (at my request, Indiana placed colonization provisions in her Constitu-

tion fifteen years ago,) I have thus been reluctantly, though intimately, connected for that time with the class of measures and questions in issue. *For one* I will not be found breaking faith with the people of the South on this subject; it is not well, it is not wise for us to be found amongst the first to disappoint the expectation we have made in such a solemn and formal manner. I have asked Southern statesmen to accept emancipation and unite with us on this policy, and they have done it—for one I dare not deceive them in this.

I intend to calmly take my stand on the Proclamation of Emancipation and its attendant oath, and be found asking the rulers of this nation the fulfillment of the compact, liberal and just as it is—emancipation for the slave, and colonization of a *free and voluntary kind*. In opposition to the labor-monger, North as well as in the South, and as formidable now in the former as in the latter, we ask nationality for the African race, and finally their undisturbed rule in the Tropical Belt; we ask no hasty action, but calm, equitable, just and well-considered action; yet we protest against retrogression in what has been already done.

If republicanism is to be preserved amongst us, *and the imperialism of the hour* quickly removed and cut short by the wise policy of the President, I expect to see the American people unite in a noble effort to give this nationality to our freedmen; but if this union comes not in our day, the future will witness the wisdom and success of that policy laid down and settled by Presidents Lincoln and Johnson.

But I will be met with the question of expense. I will answer this in a word: we can colonize extensively and wisely and not cost the nation a dollar. In 1863, under the sanction of the President, I formed engagements with the British colonies in the American tropics, for the proper settlement of as many of our freedmen as desire to change their residence. The agents of those colonies agree to muster, ship to, and settle in their fine tropical lands as many

emigrants as desire to remove thereto, without cost to us. They are this day asking me to fulfill this engagement—shall I be permitted to do so, or must I first appeal to the people for their opinion?

Mr. Lincoln *thought a world-wide necessity existed* for a combination with England on this question, and acted accordingly, believing that a union of two such powers as the United States and Great Britain could bring a third power into being for the benefit of the colored race.

I trust the leaders of the colored race will lend their aid in due time, and that we will recognize the coming future of the African and prepare him by education for the true independence in reserve for him. Undoubtedly the drift of events will carry our freedmen towards the Tropical Belt, where they will become masters of the situation and lords of the soil.

The privilege granted to British colonies, the fulfillment of which is *now* desired, will cost (as I have stated) this nation nothing. Between the Governments of Washington and London it is but a change of population, we taking the white, they taking the black, whilst in the end the blacks will take the colonies as we drifted off in 1776; whilst, for the time being, the limited imperialism of the one is best adapted to the proper government of the colored and mixed race; whilst republicanism suits the Celt and Saxon best. If this is true, should not our English speaking people, white and black, in Europe and America, *consider it*. Mr. Lincoln did consider it, and there are men in London who did respect his view. The time may come when the whole policy of the great emancipator—the true friend of the negro—will be fulfilled; for his memory and his views will now be held sacred by all English speaking nations, whether white or black. I shall never forget the fullness and emphasis of his utterance, which flowed from his great heart, when I first brought this colonization of the British colo-

nies to his notice. On asking permission to bring it to the notice of our able Secretary of State, he remarked: "Surely! *If England wants our negroes, and will do better by them than we can, I say let her have them, and may God bless her!*" This was uttered about the 23d of July, 1862, in the following September the Proclamation of Emancipation was issued, and the Secretary of State sealed the matter by his letter of the 30th of that month, addressed to our Foreign Ministers, asking the co-operation of Foreign Governments. The argument as to the intention of the Government is thus made complete.

In the light of the above facts, I think it a far fetched argument to maintain that the repeal of part of the colonization appropriation is an abandonment of the policy—whilst the fact is, the \$600,000 supposed to be repealed is not so, but is just devoted to "*existing engagements by the parties in interest, meaning Chirique;*" to which contract I would have had no objection, if the rights of the colored emigrant had been respected, and which, so far as I am concerned, shall meet with no further opposition, so soon as colored men become the owners and holders of the contract, and are to be the benefited party.

It is no part of the object of this letter to discuss the reasons for colonization, either white or black, but to disclose the policy of the past administration, and to ask you, as a Western statesman of enlarged views, to built on the foundations already laid, and to respect the claims of the men who honestly differ from the radical division of the administration party on this subject.

Since the last of June, 1864, I have conducted the office at my own expense. Through all the time that this policy and the writer have suffered attack, I have been a silent, patient supporter of the administration—not without assurance, however, from President Lincoln, that there would be a *change* in the administration of the Interior. In that time

I labored, so far as I had influence or skill, to perfect the measures of the administration on the negro question: in that effort I committed myself and political friends, so far as I have any, to the policy of Mr. Lincoln, as disclosed in this letter. I asked my friends of the Border and South to accept the Constitutional Amendment, and it was accepted. I asked them to let the Freedman's Bureau Bill become a law, promising that it would be carefully and pendently administered in the spirit of the above policy; they granted me this favor too. I may have no power to fulfill this promise, but shall I change front?—others may change front, but, under the circumstances, I cannot.

I have the honor to remain,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES MITCHELL,

Commissioner of Emigration.

Report on Emigration and Colonization,

IN ANSWER TO A RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE ADOPTED
MARCH 25, 1864.

"Resolved, That the President of the United States be requested to furnish the Senate the report of the Commissioner of Emigration for 1863, with his account of existing contracts, and other necessary information on the question of emigration."

EMIGRATION OFFICE,
WASHINGTON, Nov. 24, 1864.

His Excellency, A. LINCOLN,
President of the U. S.:

I have the honor to communicate the following statement, relating to the emigration question entrusted to me.

The present condition of our work is one of foundation and formation, having made no attempt to stimulate emigration, considering that more depends upon a proper settlement of the policy, plans and territorial location of our first settlements, than on any spasmodic movement made to be abandoned with discouragement.

In this review of the situation I desire to be careful—to avoid the wrong and follow the right—inasmuch as the future interests and well being of millions of both races depend on the issues of this eventful age. Yet, I am impelled by the strong conviction that wrong can be avoided, peace secured for future generations, and the cause of civilization served by the representative men of both the white and the

This office has been so embarrassed by an imperfect legislation, that the aid asked could not be rendered.

Liberia, as an African State, though feeble, promises much to that land—as the creature of the benevolence of our own nation, it should not be deserted; and in our opinion no more grateful service can be rendered the cause of Christianity and civilization than the multiplication of such settlements on the African continent.

Hayti is a standing applicant for all the men of color who are willing to cast in their lot with her people.

A proposition was made during the last session of Congress to dedicate and set off that part of southwestern Texas lying west of the Colorado, for the use and benefit of our people of color who might desire to settle therein, so as to give them, by concentration, the benefit of mutual protection, and place them near the borders of that semi-tropical land, Mexico.

I need hardly say all these thoughts have been before the country; and, although studiously kept out of direct issue in the late canvass, they were indirectly discussed. The early and well-known views of the administration on the subject of the best condition for the negro race, that of freedom and separate independence, gave the nation a centre around which the thoughts and expectations of the country gathered and safely revolved.

RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE.

On the 25th of March the Senate passed the following resolution:

“Resolved, That the President of the United States be requested to furnish the Senate the report of the Commissioner of Emigration for 1863, with his account of existing contracts, and other necessary information on the question of emigration.”

In answer, permit me to say, that this report contains the substance of that made for 1863, whilst it remains to answer that part which relates to contracts.

Several persons have at sundry times offered to make contracts for the deportation of persons of color, but on terms which, to a great extent, ignored the true interests of the emigrant. I regret to say, that in most instances an undue regard to the personal emolument of the parties, and want of true liberality to the man of color, have been so clearly manifested, that I thought it best to decline the completion of all such contracts, and hereafter to depend mostly on such reliable agencies as those put forward by the British Colonies, Liberia and Hayti.

It will be claimed by certain parties in interest, that there are two contracts outstanding—that known as the Chirique contract, and one formed for the purpose of colonizing the Island of A'Vache, belonging to Hayti.

I do not recognize the validity of either of these contracts, as they were formed without my knowledge or consent; and I express the hope that the papers and files drawn from this office, by sundry parties not responsible for our work, will be returned thereto at an early day.

I am ignorant of the existance of any other contract, and trust none other has been formed, as the reliable national agencies referred to will meet all the claims and wants of the enterprise in the future—the whole question is a delicate one and should be handled carefully. I trust we shall even prove grateful for the steady support you have given us in the midst of the perplexities of this dark and stormy period, and against the interference of parties not responsible either to the public or to the government for the success or failure of this enterprise.

Permit me to represent, that to the duties of this office may be added matters and interests connected with the suppression of the African slave trade. From the year 1848 we have steadily advocated, as we have had time and opportunity, sometimes giving whole years to the canvass, the propriety of settling the African coast with American set-



lements as our best and cheapest plan for the suppression of that trade. With this view you heretofore agreed and kindly lent me your aid, as a private citizen of your State, as have many other leading men of past administrations, through whose kindness a place had been given this work amongst the offices of the government, as the original plan was to place both these interests—that of the suppression of the slave trade and that of emigration—in one office, under one head. I trust that by proper legislation this will be done, as it will reduce the expense of the workings of both. I feel that, let the effect be what it may on my position, it is my duty to make this recommendation.

I respectfully ask a small appropriation to meet the claims made by "The African Civilization Society," and the current expenses of this office, inasmuch as the large appropriations heretofore made have been repealed, as not being needed under the inexpensive plan of emigration now proposed. Although it is a question of doubtful policy to go back on the well-made record of the past by such an act of repeal, inasmuch as the terms of that act of repeal closes out from the fund once appropriated, all claims except those of the two outstanding contracts named above, for the express benefit of which, according to the terms of that act of repeal, the funds are reserved. This may not have been the intent of the gentlemen who devised that act of repeal; but this is the effect of their law. The better way, in my humble judgment, would have been to let the fund alone, but organize a proper office, with men under bond to take charge of it; for I trust it will still appear right to you to maintain an official centre for this work, to which persons and parties representing colonial interests may be referred.

I have the honor to remain,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES MITCHELL,
Commissioner of Emigration.

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